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Chairs' Summary Preliminary Asia Parks Congress

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1. Background

Most Asian nations are working hard to achieve economic development while maintaining the quality of their environment. They often have difficulty in striking the balance between protection of the natural resources and development. Protected Area systems are affected by and can make a significant contribution to resolving development challenges. Asia is a vast region displaying extraordinary diversity and applies many innovative approaches to conservation and development. In this context and noting previous events such as CBD COP10 in Nagoya and the resulting Aichi Targets and the recent amalgamation of IUCN WCPA Asia as one region, the Preliminary Asia Parks Congress was held in Tokyo from November 3rd to 7th, 2011. The participants discussed common issues and ways to strengthen partnerships for Protected Areas (PAs) in Asia.

The 70 participants, representing 18 countries/territories and including experts from IUCN, academia, donors and NGO's deeply appreciates the support and commitment of Japan (Ministry of the Environment), working in partnership with IUCN, WCPA and JICA, in staging this Preliminary Asia Parks Congress.

2. Discussion on PAs in Asia

Participants from the congress were invited from government, NGOs, academia, donors and IUCN/WCPA. Throughout the Congress they provided perspectives on PAs across the region which revealed the diversity but also the commonality of their challenges and approaches. Participants reached common understanding that in Asian countries people connect cultural and spiritual values to nature. Participants recognized that in many countries governance of PAs falls under a number of models including those under the responsibility of several government agencies consequently requiring coordination amongst them. Participants also identified a number of key regional scale actions and interventions and expressed unanimous support for the concept of staging an Asia Parks Congress in 2013.

3. Moving forward to Asia Parks Congress

(1) Objectives

The Asia Parks Congress provides the opportunity to:

- Showcase the success and to advocate the values of PAs in Asia, reinforcing the relevance and broadening the constituency of support.
- Share experience across the region and particularly to promote what Asia can offer to the world.
- Set the Agenda for PAs in Asia and so facilitate action toward achieving the Aichi Targets and the objectives of the PoWPA

- Build regional capacity; find solutions to problems; energize and catalyze the PA community in Asia
- Provide regional perspective and input to relevant regional and global events including the World Parks Congress in 2014.

(2) Proposed Theme

Many thought that “**Connections**” would be a good theme that could cover many of the experiences and challenges in the region. Under this theme the emphasis is making connections: between People and Nature, between Cultural, Spiritual and Natural Values, and between PAs and the wider landscape / seascape, and many others.

(3) Proposed Outputs

- Partnership/s aimed at: contribution to Aichi Targets and PoWPA; supporting a Pan Asia PA Network; promotion of trans boundary PAs and sister parks; contribution to sharing information etc.
- Asian Philosophy / Charter of PAs which act as catalyst for cooperation, improved governance, and integration of conservation and human development
- Asian PA Status and Prospects Report including: progress toward Aichi Targets; analysis of laws and policies; Management Effectiveness evaluation and a system for recognizing well-managed PAs
- Regional Best Practice Tools for PAs as solutions to such challenges as: Natural Disaster Response, Disaster Risk Reduction, Human Wildlife Conflict, Climate Change Adaptation, applying incentives (e.g. ecotourism), Conservation of socio-ecological production landscapes(e.g. *Satoyama* initiative)

(4) Organizers

Recognizing the leadership already shown by Japan, participants call on the Government of Japan (Ministry of the Environment) to strongly consider hosting the first Asia Parks Congress on a date to be determined in 2013. The congress recognizes the opportunity for Japan to illustrate the role of PAs in post disaster reconstruction as in “Sanriku *Fukko* (reconstruction) National Park” as well as effective management in collaboration with local communities, etc.

Participants welcome the expression of commitment from the Government of Indonesia and call upon other countries within the region, IUCN and other groups to gather the necessary technical and financial and other resources necessary for the preparation of the Asia Parks Congress.

Participants agreed on the need to set up an Asia Parks Congress Steering Committee to prepare and implement the Congress ensuring open and informed participation.